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TREASURER FONG UNVEILS *SAVE-AT-SCHOOL* PROGRAM

ELK GROVE, CA -- State Treasurer Matt Fong Tuesday launched his new "Save-At-School" program designed for elementary school students to learn money management skills while they save.

Treasurer Fong was joined at Ehrhardt Elementary School by roughly 300 students, parents and faculty of the Elk Grove Unified School District as well as officials from the Elk Grove-based Stockmans Bank to unveil the program. Fong's pilot program allows students from John Ehrhardt and James A. McKee elementary schools to open savings accounts with Stockmans Bank and participate in a curriculum designed to teach sound financial skills.

"Preparing our children through education remains a top priority. Money management skills have always been important, but challenges facing the next generation make this type of education absolutely necessary," Fong said. "The Save-at-School program will give these students a head start on facing those challenges."

The program is centered around a 12-lesson teaching manual designed for use as a guide for participating educators. After the course, students will be able to determine an income, make consumer choices, plan a budget and pay bills. The curriculum activities are divided into six categories: math; social studies and history; science; computers; creative arts, including art and drama; and language arts, which includes writing and reading. The program was designed to provide flexibility to teachers by allowing them to select information from the manual as it seems appropriate for their classes.

At the kick-off, Stockmans Bank President Gary Wright praised the program for instilling in young children the value of saving money. "We're interested in encouraging young people to save at an early age, which will truly reflect the time-value of money saved," Wright said.

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Fong's goals for the Save-at-School program include promoting proper financial habits and the concept of savings, expanding students' access to savings accounts, developing problem-solving skills and combining the resources of the Treasurer's office, educators, business and the financial community in making new programs available to students.

James McKee principal Carole Sacre also lauded the program. "It is important that each of you learn to take a little of every dollar you get and set it aside in savings for the things you'll want and need in the future," Sacre told the students. "Right now is the best time for you to start that saving habit. We are excited about the 'Save-at-School program.'"

James McKee Student Council President Carly Tillotson said the program could help students save money for their college education. "I feel this program is not only important to the students of James McKee and John Ehrhardt, but to all students in our state."